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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 /076 W
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R 221010Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY OSLO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6345
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
AMEMBASSY HONGKONG
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASS OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 OSLO 4065

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OEXC, TECH, CH, NO
SUBJ: PRC STUDENTS' OFFENSIVE IN NORWAY

REF STOCKHOLM 3137

1. EMBOFF DISCUSSED THE PRC'S UMMER EFFORTS TO PLACE STUDENTS IN WESTERN SCHOOLS WITH WILL FREDRIKSEN, DIRECTOR OF MFA'S OFFICE OF ASIAN AFFAIRS. FREDRIKSEN SAID THAT THE NORWEGIANS HAD BEEN FOREWARNED OF THE PRC'S INTEREST IN EXPANDING STUDENT EXCHANGES DURING FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND'S EASTER 1978 VISIT TO PEKING. IN FACT, THE MFA WAS SOMEWHAT SURPRISED THAT IT TOOK THE CHINESE EMBASSY IN OSLO SO LONG TO MAKE THE FOLLOW-UP APPROACH.

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2. HOWEVER, DURING THE FIRST WEEK IN AUGUST THE PRC CHARGE CALLED ON THE MFA DIRECTOR OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS AND EXPLAINED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WAS INTERESTED IN PLACING A MINIMUM OF 36 STUDENTS IN NORWEGIAN SCHOOLS OF HIGHER EDUCATION. WHILE FREDRIKSEN SAID THIS WOULD SEEM A MODEST NUMBER (AND IN FACT WAS CHARACTERIZED AS SUCH BY THE CHINESE CHARGE), IN NORWAY WITH ITS

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SMALL NUMBER OF POTENTIAL SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND
INSTITUTIONS IT WAS A SIGNIFICANT ONE.
THE NORWEGIAN MFA REP PRESSED THE CHINESE CHARGE FOR
MORE DETAILS ON THE TYPE OF COURSES HIS GOVERNMENT HAD
IN MIND. THE RESPONSE WAS THAT THE CHINESE MERELY WANTED
TO KNOW "HOW MANY THE NORWEGIAN GOVERNMENT WAS WILLING
TO PLACE" AND THAT THEY COULD TAILOR THE STUDENTS TO THE
SPACES AVAILABLE.

3. THE NORWEGIAN REACTION WAS THAT IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT TO
DO THIS WITHOUT KNOWING THE DISCIPLINES WHICH INTERESTED PEKING.
THE PRC CHARGE DID CONTRIBUTE THAT THEY WISHED
TO GO BEYOND PURE LANGUAGE TRAINING; FREDRIKSEN TOLD EMBASSY THAT THE
MOST LIKELY FIELDS WERE: AGRICULTURAL
TECHNIQUES, FORRESTRY, GEOLOGY, METEOROLOGY,
MARINE BIOLOGY AND DENTISTRY. THE GON, ACCORDING
TO FREDRIKSEN, WAS VERY RELUCTANT TO
TRAIN TECHNICIANS (AS OPPOSED TO GENERALISTS) IN SOME OF
THESE FIELDS
AND HAD NO INTENTION OF OPENING UP ANY POLITICAL
SCIENCE COURSES TO THEM.

4. THE GON EXPECTS TO RESPOND TO THE CHINESE EMBASSY WITHIN
THE NEXT MONTH. IN THE MEANTIME, THE MINISTRY IS CANVASSING
THE UNIVERSITY AND INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN
NORWAY TO SEE HOW MANY STUDENTS THEY COULD TAKE. FREDRIKSEN
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THOUGHT THAT 36 WAS AN IMPOSSIBLE NUMBER BUT THAT PERHAPS
THEY COULD MANAGE 20-24.

5. HE ADDED THAT THERE WAS A
DIFFERENCE OF OPINION WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT ON HOW
FORTHCOMING NORWAY SHOULD BE: HE FOR ONE THOUGHT IT WAS VERY
ADVANTAGEOUS TO EXPOSE THE CHINESE TO THE NORWEGIAN
LANGUAGE AND THE NORWEGIAN WAY OF LIFE, PARTICULARLY
IF THESE INDIVIDUALS LATER ASSUMED POSITIONS OF
SOME RESPONSIBILITY IN THE MINISTRIES IN PEKING.
NORWAY HAS FOUND THIS TO BE QUITE USEFUL PARTICULARLY
IN THE PRC SHIPPING MINISTRY WHERE SEVERAL FORMER STUDENTS
IN NORWAY HAVE OCCUPIED KEY POSITIONS. OTHER; HOWEVER,
BELIEVE THAT THE PRC SHOULD BE TREATED THE SAME AS ANY
OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRY AND THAT NO SPECIAL EFFORT
SHOULD BE MADE TO PLACE CHINESE STUDENTS. FREDRIKSEN
IS CONFIDENT THAT THIS "PIG HEADED" POINT OF VIEW WILL
BE OVERCOME.

6. FREDRIKSEN IS CONCERNED THAT THE CHINESE DO NOT
UNDERSTAND THE POTENTIAL FINANCIAL COSTS INVOLVED.
THEY TOLD THE MFA CULTURAL REP THAT THE PRC WOULD PAY ALL

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COSTS AND WERE VERY PLEASANTLY SURPRISED TO BE INFORMED THAT
THE CHARGES IN SOCIALIST NORWAY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION
ARE VERY LOW. HOWEVER, HE IS CONCERNED THAT THEY DO
NOT UNDERSTAND THAT THE LIVING COSTS COULD BE VERY HIGH.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 OSLO 4065

7. BY WAY OF BACKGROUND, FREDRIKSEN SAID THE GON HAS
HAD A FAIRLY LONGSTANDING HISTORY OF CULTURAL AND
EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGES WITH THE PRC DATING BACK TO
THE LATE 50S. MOST OF THE CHINESE STUDENTS WHO
CAME TO NORWAY AT THAT TIME STUDIED LANGUAGES
EXCLUSIVELY, ALTHOUGH ONE OR TWO DID SPECIALIZE IN
MARINE BIOLOGY AND SOCIAL STUDIES. WITH SOME PRIDE,
FREDRIKSEN NOTED THAT THE CULTURAL AGREEMENT NORWAY
SIGNED WITH THE PRC IN 1964 WAS THE FIRST PEKING HAD
SIGNED WITH A NONCOMMUNIST COUNTRY. HE NOTED THAT
THERE IS A FAIR AMOUNT OF INTEREST IN NORWAY,
PARTICULARLY AMONG ARTISTS, ENGRAVERS AND PRINTERS
IN GOING TO CHINA FOR FUTURE TRAINING. HOWEVER,
HE COMMENTED THERE IS VERY LITTLE INTEREST AMONG STUDENTS
IN ATTENDING CHINESE COLLEGES. THE NORWEGIAN-CHINESE
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FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY ESTABLISHED IN NOVEMBER OF 1977 IS
VERY MUCH INTERESTED IN SUPPORTING ADDITIONAL CROSS
FERTILIZATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, AND HAD CONTRIBUTED
TOWARDS RAISING NORWEGIAN CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE POSSIBILITIES
OFFERED.

8. IN SUM, NORWAY IS INTERESTED IN INCREASING THE CULTURAL
AND EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGES WITH THE PRC BUT DOES NOT WANT
IT TO GO BEYOND A MODEST PROGRAM IN TERMS OF MONEY AND
NUMBERS OF PEOPLE AND VARIETY OF FIELDS OFFERED.

9. FREDIKSEN WHO HAS HAD A NUMBER OF YEARS OF EXPERIENCE
IN CHIENESE AFFAIRS (HE SERVED IN THE NORWEGIAN EMBASSY
IN PEKING FROM 1972 TO 1975), SAID IT WAS HIS IMPRESSION
FROM HIS CONVERSATION DURING THE FRYDENLUND VISIT
AND SUBSEQUENTLY THAT THE CURRENT EDUCATIONAL
OFFENSIVE IS BEING VERY NAIVELY CONSSTRUCTED AND
IMPLEMENTED BY PEOPLE IN PEKING WHO HAVE LITTLE OR
NO UNDERSTANDING OF WESTERN UNIVERSITIES AND CULTURAL
EXCHANGE PRACTICES. THEY SEEM TO THINK, HE SAID,
THAT ALL CHINESE STUDENTS ARE FUNGIBLE AND THAT YOU
MERELY DROP THEM INTO THE WESTERN HIGHER EDUCATION
PIPELINE WITHOUT REFERENCE TO FIELDS OF INTEREST OR
ACADEMIC DISCIPLINES AND OUT COME TRAINED AND
USEFUL PRODUCTS.

10. FREDRIKSEN PROMISED TO COMMUNICATE
THE GON'S RESPONSE TO THE CHINESE AS SOON AS A DECISION
HAS BEEN REACHED.
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